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Volleyball Rolls through First Week of Practice

The Eagles open the campaign Aug. 26 against No. 19 North Carolina

Marc Gignac



Women's Volleyball | 8/10/2016 3:57:00 PM

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STATESBORO, Ga. – The Georgia Southern volleyball team opened preseason camp

last Saturday and finished Day 5 of preseason with today's morning session. With six starters back and a blend of 10 veterans and 10 newcomers in the gym, head coach [Dustin Wood](#) wanted to start building team chemistry right away.

"The goal is having them buy in as quick as you can, and I think the first day, we set the tone," Wood said. "They got the intensity level up, and we let them play a little bit. We've been doing a lot of playing and watching the film so now we can see what we need to hone in on. We'll break things down more the second half of preseason. The biggest thing was the cohesion of the group, and they are well on their way."

The intensity level has been high at every position as the student-athletes attempt to find and establish their roles on the team. Practices are fast-paced with action on multiple courts.

"The luxury of having 20 in the gym, which we haven't had before, is that we're able to do more things at practice, and kids are able to get some interval rest," Wood said. "Everybody is moving at 100 percent and not gassing out an hour into practice. So the competition level is higher. We're able to scrimmage more across the net and also work on the technical things, and they are having fun with it."

With so many new faces on the squad, veteran leadership has been an invaluable piece of reinforcing the culture of the program.

"That core group has been showing them the way and helping them out," Wood said. "When Katie (Bange) says something, everybody does it, and Alex (Beecher) is showing them how to play on the floor. Chev ([Megan Chevalier](#)) does it by example, and Cathrine (Murray) has been a pretty vocal leader on and off the floor this year and has matured in the process."

With two weeks left until the season opener against No. 19 North Carolina at the Penn State Classic Aug. 26, Wood hopes to fine tune the fundamentals and that the student-athletes develop consistency in all phases of the game.

"We're running the offense with a little more speed this year, and we need to clean up some of the offense," he said. "Defensively, they've shown that they can do the things we're working on, but we're not consistent and we need to go into that first weekend playing more consistent."

The Eagles play three matches on opening weekend in State College, Pa. In addition to the Tar Heels, Georgia Southern faces host Penn State, which is ranked ninth in the country, and West Virginia.

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